

MMS Alaska OCS Region

Focus Sheet

Government-to-Government Relations

The Minerals Management Service recognizes and is committed to working in a Government-to-Government relationship with Native Alaska tribes that are federally recognized. Although the MMS works with all communities and stakeholders, we work with Alaska Native tribes in a manner that is respectful of their status as sovereign nations.

The Federal Government's special relationship with federally recognized tribes started with the Constitution and has continued to be strengthened. Today, the Federal Government strives to work with tribes in regards to federal actions that may affect a tribe, its resources, its membership or its status as a sovereign nation. All of our efforts are based upon the premise that Federally recognized Tribes have a special, unique legal and political relationship with the Government of the United States as defined by the U.S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders. These definitive authorities also serve as the basis for the Federal Government's obligation to acknowledge the status of federally recognized Tribes in Alaska. There are 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

Because of the unique situation of land owned by Alaska Native Tribes and their status as sovereign nations, the Alaska offices and agencies in the Department of the Interior, in conjunction with the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council and with input from Tribes in Alaska, developed a policy to provide guidance to DOI employees who may work with tribes, tribal members, or work in programs that may impact tribal resources.

The Department of the Interior-Alaska Policy on Government-to-Government Relations with Alaska Native Tribes was signed January 18, 2000. It provides guidance to all employees, officers, and agents of the Agencies involved with a Federal action(s) that will have a substantial, direct effect on federally recognized Tribes in Alaska. It is also intended to promote and reinforce the foundation for establishing and maintaining effective governmental communications, consultation, and coordination with federally recognized Tribes in Alaska, and to ensure that the consultation process is conducted in a culturally sensitive manner.

The Alaska policy was drafted to assure compliance with the Department of the Interior's national intention, dedication and commitment to work with all federally recognized Tribes based upon:

- 1) The **April 29, 1994, Executive Memorandum** on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments, and
- 2) **Executive Order No. 13175**, November 6, 2000, on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, on a Government-to-Government basis.

John Goll, Director of MMS OCS Alaska Region, signed the DOI Alaska policy and is committed to insuring that the Regional staff abide by its guidance for working with Alaska Native Tribes in a manner that is both respectful of Tribal sovereignty and is conducted in a culturally sensitive manner.

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For More Information

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